



Minutes

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION

Monthly Meeting

April 02, 2015, 9:00 AM

District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium

3301 Gun Club Road

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Attendee Name	Title	Status
James J. Moran	Chairman	Absent
Kevin Powers	Vice-Chairman	Present
Douglas Yoder	Alternate	Present
D. Albrey Arrington	Utility	Present
Shelley Vana	Local Government	Present
Douglas Bournique	Agriculture	Present
Bob Ulevich	Alternate for Doug Bournique	Absent
Harry Cronin	Alternate for Jim Reynolds	Absent
Jim Reynolds	Utility	Present
Kurt Harclerode	Alternate for Pam Keyes	Absent
Michael Harford	Local Government	Absent
Mark Perry	Environmental	Present
James Humble	Agriculture	Present
William "Chad" Kennedy	FDEP	Present
John T. Lamkin	NOAA / Federal	Absent
Joan Lawrence	US DOI / Federal	Present
Barbara Miedema	Agriculture	Present
Linda McCarthy	Alternate for Bubba Wade	Present
Kimberly Lawrence	Alternate for Michael Harford	Absent
Newton Cook	Public Interest	Present
Barron Moody	Alternate for Ernie Marks	Present
Mary Ann Martin	Public Interest	Present
Brian L. Wheeler	Utility	Present
Joe Capra	Business	Present
Michael Collins	Public Interest	Present
James Erskine	Miccosukee Tribe	Absent
Marta Reczko	Alternate for Miccosukee Tribe	Present
John Lesman	Business	Present
Ashley Tripp	Alternate for Mary Ann Martin	Absent

Wovoka Tommie	Seminole Tribe	Absent
Malcolm "Bubba" Wade	Agriculture	Present
Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch	Alternate for Joe Capra	Present
Thomas Greco	USACE	Present
Neale Montgomery	Business	Absent
Harry Raucher	Utility	Present
Pat Martin	Alternate for Harry Raucher	Absent
Joshua Kellam	Business	Present
Lance R. Bennett	Business	Present
Erin Deady	Environmental	Present
Adam Gelber	Public Interest	Present
Jason Liechty	Alternate	Present
Tom Jones	Agriculture	Present
Mike Sweeney	Alternate for Brian Wheeler	Present
Pam Keyes	Utility	Absent
Jenny Conner Nelms	Environmental	Absent
Nancy Payton	Environmental	Present
W. Scott Ray	FDACS / Statewide	Present
Karson Turner	Local Government	Present
Tabitha Cale	Environmental	Present
Jill Hoog	Business	Present
Ernie Marks	FWC/Statewide	Absent

1. **Call to Order – Kevin Powers, WRAC Vice-Chairman**

Mr. Powers called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and announced Mr. Moran's absence due to a personal matter. Mr. Powers also announced that the May meeting will be held at the Phicol E. Williams Community Center in Homestead.

Mr. Powers recognized Lieutenant Colonel Greco, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), for his service on WRAC as today would be his last meeting. LTC Greco commented on his experience as a WRAC member and his tenure in the USACE and announced that LTC Jen Reynolds would be his replacement with an expected arrival in June.

2. **WRAC Member Issues**

Adam Gelber, Atkins North America, Inc., apologized for missing last month's meeting due to a 16-day family camping trip in the Everglades. Mr. Gelber noted that fishing in the area seemed to be off in Everglades National Park (Park) and roseate spoonbill nesting appeared to have been significantly decreased. Mr. Gelber asked that staff look into the issue.

Newton Cook, United Waterfowlers, reported on the WRAC Recreational Issues Workshop (RIW) that met on March 16, 2015. Mr. Cook announced that the next WRAC RIW would be held on June 15, 2015 at District headquarters. Mr. Cook talked about House Bill 7135 that is currently in the state's House State Affairs Committee

which requires state land management agencies including the Florida Park Service and water management districts to identify lands that could tolerate low impact agricultural use while maintaining its conservation purposes. Mr. Cook stated these lands are adjacent to privately owned-land and would give rights to these owners to use public lands thereby limiting access to public lands. Mr. Cook asserted that if this bill continues to move it will negatively impact the public's ability to access public lands including in state parks.

Michael Collins, Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association/Florida Bay Initiative, agreed with Mr. Gelber's remarks regarding something going on in Florida Bay. Mr. Collins noted that fishing is off and said that a number of anecdotal reports have been issued since last summer indicating an across-the-board fall-off in the fishery. Mr. Collins said trout, jack, ladyfish, snook are sparse and red fish have not been seen at all. Mr. Collins said he met with District research staff and there has been no notable change in water quality, salinity or seagrass distribution. Mr. Collins continued he spoke with fisheries research staff at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and there appears to be a gap in research from Naples south into Everglades National Park (Park) although there is an abundance of information for Charlotte Harbor to Tampa Bay. Mr. Collins remarked a reconnaissance team is being put together of state and federal stakeholders that should also include District staff. Mr. Collins committed to keeping WRAC members informed of any resulting findings.

Joshua Kellam, The ESG Companies, thanked the Colonel for his hard work and stated that his service on WRAC was appreciated.

Doug Bournique, Indian River Citrus League, said that the league is working on endangered species language with FWC and hoped to have a draft shortly. Mr. Bournique announced the resignation of the St. Johns River Water Management District's executive director and some of the leadership staff.

Joan Lawrence, US Department of Interior (DOI), announced a joint Working Group and Science Coordination Group meeting would be held on April 30th at District headquarters beginning at 10:00 am. Ms. Lawrence thanked the Colonel for his service in south Florida particularly the assistance he has provided to DOI.

Rob Robbins, Palm Beach County – Alternate for Commissioner Shelley Vana, stated Palm Beach County is active in installing trailheads, providing pedestrian trails and foot bridges over District rights-of-way and appreciates the cooperation of the District for allowing them to do so. Mr. Robbins said that sometimes the District is not the owner of some underlying rights-of-way and the county is pursuing acquisition of those properties in order to open them up for more passive recreation and will work with the District to accomplish this task.

Jason Liechty, Broward County – Alternate to Vacant Broward County Position, said Broward County is looking forward to working with newly appointed Governing Board Member Clarke Harlow and echoed the many positive sentiments concerning LTC Greco and his retirement.

Marta Reczko, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians – sitting in for James Erskine, introduced herself.

Joe Capra, CAPTEC Engineering, congratulated LTC Greco on his retirement. Mr. Capra stated that spring training for baseball would start soon and appreciated the efforts of Mayor Vana and the Palm Beach County Commission's efforts to keep baseball in southeast Florida. Mr. Capra said the president visited the Treasure Coast last week and golfed near the estuary but unfortunately the backdrop was of Lake Okeechobee discharges. Mr. Capra stated that he was confident that this issue will be fixed with continued concentration of efforts. Mr. Capra said that the legislature is in session and said there are many things to accomplish and recommended that WRAC ask the Governing Board to consider pushing the legislature to ensure that the \$5B the Governor promised over the next 20 years for everglades restoration is included in the appropriations bill and that projects that are planned continue to get funded. Mr. Capra expressed concern over changing plans midstream which tends to result in the need to start completely over and wasted taxpayer dollars. Mr. Capra remarked that many of the current plans include land acquisition and he believes that everyone involved is interested in fairly acquiring lands at the best possible value in all the areas it is needed whether north, south, east or west of the Lake. Mr. Capra stated he feels no one is interested in any land grabs as referenced in the local newspapers and believes current plans promote job creation. Mr. Capra continued that he appreciates the recent public demonstrations, but there is a need to educate the public more on the issues and current plans so that people are better informed. Mr. Capra said in light of an impending deadline, WRAC needs to weigh in on the option to purchase lands from US Sugar as outlined in the leasing agreement, and if there are no plans to purchase these lands those intentions need to be clearly communicated.

Mark Perry, Florida Oceanographic Society, thanked Colonel Greco for his service and his involvement in all of the meetings where important water policy issues. Mr. Perry stated the Lake is just below 14 feet and the USACE has agreed to ramp down releases to the St. Lucie and Indian River Lagoon to zero beginning on April 3rd due to bacterial sampling being undertaken by Martin County. Mr. Perry said if pulse releases were implemented more often it would mimic more closely natural storm events and keep the system more balanced, but currently the USACE is on track to hit a target of 12.8ft to 13ft on June 1st which is ideal for the habitat. Mr. Perry referenced a report released by Florida Realtors which came out this week with a focus on Martin and Lee counties outlining declining or increasing property values correlating to water quality indicating significant declines in property value when water quality is poor. Mr. Perry discussed the University of Florida Water Institute study as one of the most comprehensive sources of pooled scientific and engineering information and is an assessment of options to stop some of the fresh water discharges to coastal estuaries and move water south through the system to the Everglades or Florida Bay as needed. Mr. Perry explained that the report stated several times that the existing planned projects such as Restoration Strategies and the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) would not be sufficient enough to stop damaging discharges and a fundamental finding was to exercise the option to purchase lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA). Mr. Perry maintained WRAC needs to recommend that the Governing Board take advantage of acquiring those option lands. Mr. Perry stated that he acknowledged the legislature's role in allocating funding to purchase lands and that some legislators wanted to

purchase additional lands by increasing the Florida Forever Fund while others hold that enough land is in public ownership. Mr. Perry stated that the passage of Amendment 1 in November was an indication that Florida voters want those funds to be used to exercise the option to purchase land in the EAA that will be significant enough to provide storage, treatment and conveyance of water out of Lake Okeechobee. Mr. Perry stated that the Rivers Coalition has written letters to the Governing Board and he believes a related item would be on the Governing Board agenda next Thursday and urged WRAC members to be present. Mr. Perry said, like Mr. Capra, he appreciates the protests and other activities which point out the need for continued discussion.

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Greco, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), thanked WRAC members for their kind words and looked forward to the discussion on the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) as some good work is being done in this area.

Blake Guillory, South Florida Water Management District Executive Director, acknowledged the service of LTC Greco and stated that the agency would miss him. Mr. Guillory continued that eighteen months ago the agency was in the midst of the Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 1 West land swap which was behind schedule and through coordinated efforts the USACE we are on track to complete Kissimmee River Restoration, C-111 South Dade, C-44 and C-43. Mr. Guillory explained that although the Governor has communicated his desire to provide \$5B over the next twenty years, there are no guarantees that the legislature will agree to that level of funding. Mr. Guillory continued that the Governor's proposal is monumental and would memorialize recurring funding in state legislation for Everglades Restoration allowing for more tangible planning efforts. Mr. Guillory stated that there is only a short time left to solidify this funding and there are legislators that are not in support of the effort. Mr. Guillory stressed the importance of staying focused on this funding plan and genuine stakeholder support of the Governor's twenty-year plan as this type of opportunity is rare. Mr. Guillory stated that if this plan passes along with federal matching funds, many key projects will be able to get completed.

Tabitha Cale, Audubon FL, stated that Audubon supports purchasing the land for storage as outlined in the UF Study because it is known that more storage is needed in the system particularly in light of losing some storage that would have been provided through aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) which is no longer available. Ms. Cale discussed the partnership that has begun to emerge between the District and some of Audubon's local chapters on STA tours through press releases and other interactions and commended the partnership which helps increase public awareness.

Public Comment

See General Public Comment.

3. Integrated Delivery Schedule Update - Tom Teets, Director, Everglades Policy and Coordination Division, SFWMD

WRAC Discussion

Mike Collins said the process seems rational and reasonable in comparison to the River of Grass planning process. Mr. Collins stated the CEPP Project Implementation Report (PIR), left open many issues related endangered species and sequencing of CEPP projects related to water quality and at some point there has to be ground-truthing to connect this to Restoration Strategies (RS) and asked would that take place during the current process or will it be deferred to the PIR which may get even further delayed? Mr. Collins said no one would like to see projects that are totally reliant on RS and that water moved up ahead of projects that could provide benefits to the environment estuaries and Everglades National Park (Park) sooner. Mr. Teets responded that CEPP is different in that for each of the three groupings there will be additional planning before moving to the detailed design phase. Kim Taplin, USACE, said that for example the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) South would look at water reservations and the savings clause to make sure that as one piece is implemented, the savings clause is being met and water reservations are being applied through a requirement known as a Limited Reevaluation Report (LRR). Ms. Taplin continued the assumption is that during the three years following authorization outlined in Mr. Teets' process slide, the LRR is completed prior to the PPA. Mr. Collins said that unresolved issues that linger regarding the interface with RS may cause a problem. Mr. Collins continued that he has been hearing rumblings from some members of the federal family implying that many projects can get moved ahead of RS due to changing priorities; however, stakeholders have been involved for a long time and it is time to see some bang for the buck meaning that more storage needs to be developed over flow projects.

Barbara Miedema, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida, remarked she understands the federal government is measuring data using new datum standards as opposed to NGVD to account for sea level rise and requested a presentation on new datum standards or changes as they apply to construction or design of new projects. Ms. Miedema said there appears to be a foot to a foot-and-a-half difference in control points.

Mark Perry stated he was appreciative of the IDS process and the timing is good as the schedule has not been updated since 2011. Mr. Perry said it is his understanding that RS must precede CEPP and knows that some RS projects are already underway and asked if there was a possibility that CEPP receive authorization prior to a possible 2016 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA). Tom replied theoretically a project can be authorized through vehicles other than a WRRDA such as an independent bill but would be much easier through a WRRDA. Mr. Perry asked if the IDS schedule could be formatted similarly to the District's Restoration Projects tri-fold even though the document does a great job providing historical information such as yellow book nomenclature. Mr. Perry used the EAA Storage Reservoir as an example of a project that started in the yellow book as a two-phase project with three compartments containing about 60,000 acres and has since changed to the A-1/A-2 structure with about 31,000 acres while maintaining the capacity to store 360,000 ac-ft of water which has changed again to becoming flow equalization basin (FEB) without the same storage capacity. Mr. Perry provided additional history regarding the original yellow book document for 68 CERP projects including the C-44 Reservoir and STA and C-23/C-24 Reservoir and STA projects that were rolled into the Indian River Lagoon South (IRL-S) project and stated that even though projects were in the original document, they do have the tendency to change in scope and size and it is good to

keep in mind what is mandated and what has been done and the changes that have occurred along the way. Mr. Perry stated his understanding that the District's role is to plan and design projects in conjunction with the USACE and land acquisition is strictly the State's responsibility and construction is a 50/50 cost share as long as it is a part of CERP. Mr. Teets responded generally speaking 75% of costs are for construction and 25% land acquisition, and there has always been a general understanding the District would have to complete some of the construction. Mr. Teets used C-44 as an example to illustrate that point. Mr. Teets said that adding to the complexity of the cost share structure, the federal government has provided funding, in some years, through the Farm Bill.

Mike Collins revisited Mr. Guillory's earlier comments regarding the Governor's \$5B plan and stated the District used to make these decisions but now the legislature will tell the District what projects receive funding. Mr. Collins said legislative leadership has made it clear that their priorities are to deal with projects that are already in the works and maintain land that has already been acquired. Mr. Collins continued CERP got an exemption from the normal cost-benefit analysis that must be done for USACE projects and now the legislature is poised to impose a cost-benefit analysis on all projects which is what makes him nervous when new initiative ideas appear to be similar to the River of Grass process which contained a hodge-podge of projects between \$8B-\$14B and cannot be integrated into any existing initiatives. Mr. Collins said that even though there are public vetting processes for many initiatives, the real decision-making authority lies in Tallahassee so his advice is to be aware of the priorities as established by legislative leadership.

Blake Guillory agreed with Mr. Collins' comments and said there is so much discussion of the IDS process and about what projects get done, which projects go first, and how projects get done. Mr. Guillory said looking at the last two years and how things have moved forward based on funding highlights the need to identify a dedicated source of funding and if the federal government matches that funding then the IDS will mean a lot more and will move forward a lot faster so there is a need to rally around the governor's proposal for dedicated funding.

Mark Perry pointed out that the current IDS document contains two very important lines in terms of federal funding or state funding and can be used as a tool to carry to legislators and demonstrate what has been done and what needs to be done and ask who will take on the responsibility.

Joe Capra expressed concern that a project involves a ten to twelve year process to get to completion and sought clarification that the legislature cannot alter plans, but only has the ability to affect timing due to state budget allocations. Mr. Capra said there is a need for consistent stakeholder involvement so that people who were engaged in the process are not being replaced continually by those who are unfamiliar and may cause additional project delays and there is a need to rely on Mr. Guillory to get these projects done.

LTC Greco clarified the IDS is not a binding document to legislators or elected officials but serves as a good tool that provides a path for agencies like the USACE or the District to prioritize and show what should come next. The Colonel agreed that

comments centered around having the interdependencies right are spot on and is a major purpose of the public vetting process and that all are apprised of the roadmap going forward.

Public Comment

No public comment.

4. L-8 Flow Equalization Basin and Pump Station S-5A Overview - John Mitnik, Engineering and Construction Bureau Chief, Operations, Engineering & Construction Division, SFWMD

WRAC Member Comment

Mike Collins commented on the altitude of the drones being flown and the impressive composition of a pump located at S-5A. Mr. Guillory added to the comments about the pump station and its remarkable performance and mechanics.

Jason Liechty pointed out the C-51 reservoir that is also being pursued in the area through a partnership between Broward, Palm Beach County and some of the water utilities for water supply and flood control benefits.

Mark Perry asked what the water table is and how much dewatering was needed to get to -37ft. Mr. Mitnik said during construction the bottom of the slab is at -52ft, so dewatering for that area was done to -60ft or more. Mr. Mitnik continued that the reservoir will fluctuate between -37ft and +16.5ft NGVD.

Tabitha Cale asked how the FEB will help the adjacent STA and if there was a concern about chloride and sulfate concentration levels in the FEB and how they will be measured and if there are potential impacts to the STA. Mr. Mitnik explained and demonstrated how an FEB works to regulate flows to the receiving water body by capturing surges. Mr. Mitnik explained the history of the site when it was a rock mine and explained that chloride levels continue to drop as more fresh water is added to the reservoir and stated the FEB is currently at the right levels for discharge. Ms. Cale asked for a status on regional source controls around the S5A basin. Ms. Cale was referred to Terrie Bates or Sharon Trost.

Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Staff Reports

No staff reports.

6. General Public Comment

Commissioner Ed Fielding, Martin County Board of County Commissioners, agreed with Mr. Guillory by stating that he believes that all stakeholders are concerned with effective

implementation of planned projects. The commissioner continued he hopes that storing water south could be achieved through exercising the option to purchase land in the EAA as the whole plan calls for at least 360,000 acre-ft of storage as necessary some place south. Commissioner Fielding contended that if storage opportunities are not realized south, failure to revitalize the Everglades would occur along with the loss of water supply protection for large southern urban areas and the mission will not be accomplished.

Darrell Brand said he represents a yacht club along the St. Lucie River and asked that WRAC make a recommendation to the Governing Board to add the option to purchase US Sugar lands added to their next agenda. Mr. Brand said that failure to move water south is a failure of CERP and asked that the Governing Board follow recommendations found in the UF Study to purchase lands as the opportunity will not come again.

Eileen Dufleur advocated for the purchase of option lands in the EAA for the purposes of preserving the estuaries for use for future generations especially her grandchildren and suggested an agenda item be added to the next Governing Board agenda.

Gayle Ryan, Stuart Florida, said someone has been illegally sending poisonous water to the east coast and the river and stated that the District should buy the land and send the poisonous water south to stop discharges east and west. Ms. Ryan said the poisoning of the children, seaweed and animals on both east and west coasts needs to be stopped and the legislators in Tallahassee do not understand that Everglades restoration will not work if more water is not sent south. Ms. Ryan suggested that WRAC explain to legislators that 350,000 ac-ft of storage is part of the CERP plan and will protect the Miami water supply and is the only way the coastal communities can survive. Ms. Ryan asked WRAC to make a recommendation to the Governing Board to purchase option lands to be used for storage in the south. James Humble took exception to that comment and stated

Charles Grande, former St. Lucie County Commissioner, stated that Treasure Coast residents understand that if water cannot be stored, cleaned or conveyed south then water necessary to hydrate the Everglades and the east/west coast discharges will never be stopped. Mr. Grande stated that option lands should be considered for purchase, particularly the 26,000 acres that would enable the EAA storage facility functional and an opportunity is now opened that would allow for more storage to occur because the money is available and the option is on the table.

Caroline McLaughlin, National Parks Conservation Association, spoke in support of purchasing the lands in the EAA to store more water south of Lake Okeechobee. Ms. McLaughlin said the need for water storage is an essential part of CERP which was identified in the first scientific studies leading to the plan. Ms. McLaughlin continued there is a need for deep water storage in the EAA to restore its ecological role which has been pointed out by the National Academy of Sciences in their periodic reviews of restoration sciences plans. Ms. McLaughlin stated that US Sugar touted the plan as a good idea before it changed its mind and concluded that the deal would be worthwhile for Florida.

Final WRAC Member Comment

Mark Perry announced the 3rd Annual Everglades Action Day in Tallahassee on Tuesday April 7th. Mr. Perry asked that the WRAC report to the Governing to include the suggestion that the Board review the option to purchase lands in the EAA.

Bubba Wade, US Sugar Corporation, said that he wanted to respond to comments heard during public comment and comments made on the IDS presentation particularly those referring to needing 360,000 acre-ft of storage south of Lake Okeechobee. Mr. Wade said the genesis of that idea came during the Restudy process for formulating CERP when Stu Applebaum claiming to have fixed the issue of the reservoirs by determining a need for constructing three, six-foot deep, 20,000 acre reservoirs which, when calculated add to the 360,000 ac-ft number that several speakers have referred to. Mr. Wade recalled that there was never a thought that all three reservoirs would be in use, but when times were dry, at least one of the reservoirs would have water to supplement water supply while the other two reservoirs would have a least enough water in them to remain wet. Mr. Wade continued that it was determined that any storage greater than 60,000 acres would harm water supply in the Everglades because it would be equivalent to building a new lake and the evapotranspiration rate would be too high. Mr. Wade said the Talisman deal resulted in 30,000 acres of state owned lands north of Holeyland and STA 3/4 which changed the discussion to know having a 30,000 acre reservoir at 12ft deep. Mr. Wade said in 2003 a new plan was developed for the Everglades Forever Act (EFA) which called for the new Compartments B and C to be added along with additional STAs. Mr. Wade stated in 2005 hurricane Katrina hit and caused dam standards to be changed resulting in abandoning the idea of a 12ft reservoir because of cost issues associated with the new standards. Mr. Wade said the state and federal parties then began to discuss flow equalization basins (FEB) which at four feet deep would be a cross between an STA and a deep storage reservoir. Mr. Wade stated that in 2007-2008 the CEPP planning process began and took a look at a combination of storage reservoirs and FEBs as possibilities in the A-1 and A-2 reservoir area and the cost of deep storage at A-1 was abandoned because of price. Mr. Wade said Restoration Strategies emerged in 2013 which included additional FEBs and STAs to reach the ultimate standard. Mr. Wade said that at the September 2014 WRAC meeting it was discussed between Bob Johnson and LTC Greco that once CEPP, Mod Waters, and Restoration Strategies were all built out, only an additional 235,000 acre-ft of Lake water would need to be moved south. Mr. Wade pointed out that people who keep saying that CERP calls for 360,000 ac-ft of storage and that goal has yet to be achieved, therefore more storage is needed should be aware that CERP began with the theory of adaptive management and people must realize that every time the plan was changed it was to adapt to changing needs based on actual data and twenty-plus years of experience. Mr. Wade said there is no longer a mythical 360,000 ac-ft of storage associated with 60,000 acres of land as this number is no longer needed. Mr. Wade said a commenter stated the original purpose of the Restudy was to send water down to the Everglades; however Mr. Wade clarified that the Restudy never had a purpose of sending water south, but focused on the storage of 205 million gallons per day (mgd) of storage through ASR wells strategically located north of the Lake. Mr. Wade said the purpose of the Restudy and subsequent studies has always been to figure out how much water the Park really needs in water supply and the best way to deliver it. Mr. Wade responded to comments related to poisonous water being sent to the estuaries and reminded WRAC members that presentations have been given on the subject

before and agriculture only sends an average of 5% of the water and phosphorus that goes into Lake Okeechobee, so it's not agricultural water that is going to the estuaries. Mr. Wade said the system is designed so that EAA water goes into the Everglades to supply its needs. Mr. Wade continued that looking at the reservoir that is being proposed on 26,000 acres of US Sugar lands, is comparable to the "21,000 and the seven in the IFAS study that was looked at under the CEPP process" so if this acreage is to be built to store four feet of water like an FEB it would only provide 80,000 ac-ft of storage, and if it is built to 12ft deep it would cost about \$2B plus \$500M for land and store 200,000 ac-ft of water. Mr. Wade commented in 2013, 4.5M ac-ft of water was flowing through the estuaries with two-thirds of that being local discharge so the thought that 200,000 ac-ft would solve the problem is unrealistic. Mr. Wade stated the only solution is to figure out some other way to store water north of the Lake such as ASR wells or northern storage reservoirs. Mr. Wade said this problem will not be resolved by thinking that the water can be stored south in the EAA, especially when the highest possible storage volume is 200,000 ac-ft which assumes that the system is totally dry before operation, and past experience shows that in wet years when there is a need to move water into the estuaries, the infrastructure is usually already full. Mr. Wade concluded that he wanted to provide some history on CERP and clarify some of the things that were said earlier.

Barbara Miedema said that if the actual recorded flows into Everglades National Park were looked at from the late 1930s through the period of record, three more times the amount of water is now going into the Park today. Ms. Miedema stated that the idea that less than half the water is going into the Park today than in the 1930s does not match the recorded flows.

James Humble, Miami-Dade Agricultural Practices Advisory Board, commented this is not poisonous water and that idea is total fantasy and a misrepresentation and demeans industry business owners. Mr. Humble said the Park never seems to try and correct this type of misinformation that appears to be coming from NGOs. Mr. Humble added that most of the water is diverted from entering the Park due to phosphorus limits and ends up flooding south Dade County which is the home of two of the oldest cities in Florida. Mr. Humble continued that insurers are now going to stop providing insurance to farmers for water damaged crops while agencies seem to be studying whether or not there is damage that has been caused by the flooding problem. Mr. Humble continued that banks are beginning to get concerned due to declining value. Mr. Humble said the same land that is being considered for acquisition is being simultaneously destroyed which he perceives as unconscionable and perhaps criminal. Mr. Powers pointed out that WRAC would be held in Homestead in July to provide a forum for discussion on the topic.

Newton Cook reiterated Mr. Wade's statements by stating that the 12ft reservoir that was originally envisioned for EAA A-1 and A-2 was not possible due to its price tag so the plan was modified to build a 4ft FEB. Mr. Cook said he is a proponent of purchasing land south of the Lake, but even if the 26,000 acres was purchased, a 12ft reservoir would not be constructed on the property. Mr. Cook stated the USACE ran a study on the results capacity to move water south and its effect on the estuaries if all planned initiatives were completed including CEPP, RS, Mod Waters without constraints or considerations such as phosphorus levels and wildlife impact. Mr. Cook said that

USACE's Pete Ryan said that over a thirty-six year period the number of times the estuary would receive too much fresh water due to excess water in the system would be reduced by thirty percent. Mr. Cook used the example that if there were three major rain events in six years causing three hits to the estuaries, the resulting projects would eliminate one event resulting in two hits in six years which would still destroy the estuaries. Mr. Cook said he supports the purchase because the property lies in the Everglades footprint, but if the purchase does not take place now, it could take place in the future, but purchasing the property will not resolve the problem of east/west discharges.

Mark Perry said if all of the solutions are not on the table at this time or if there are issues with cost, those are constraints that can be overcome but a solution is needed. Mr. Perry said if only 200,000 ac-ft of water was able to move south to provide water to the Park and no more water could go south from the Lake and ASR is the only criteria... Mr. Perry said the regional study just showed that only 70 out of 200 ASR wells would be potentially active. Mr. Perry said he'd like to explore the historical records of flows to the Everglades as mentioned by Ms. Miedema because he feels that part of the solution is to restore water flow south and perhaps that is only 200,000-235,000 ac-ft but something must be done about the rest of the water that is going to the estuaries. Mr. Perry said WRAC and the Governing Board should be focused on the issue of the tremendous rate that fresh water is being dumped in the Atlantic and the Gulf to the tune of 1.7B gallons a day which is wasting fresh water that is needed in Florida that needs to be moved slowly south. Mr. Perry said he is not about sending poisonous water south and the poison that was mentioned by the public speaker was regarding the toxic algae blooms that result when water is released from the Lake and out into the estuaries and the Health Department posts signs warning residents to avoid contact with the water due to toxins. Mr. Perry said no one wants to send poisonous water south, they want to send clean water south if it were to go south at all. Mr. Humble stated that the term "poisonous water" came from Mr. Perry. Mr. Perry said that he is not suggesting that poisons are released into the system by the EAA necessarily, but there are high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen being delivered to the system and there are no constraints to delivering water east and west through the estuaries. Mr. Perry said the maximum amount of water needs to be sent south through the system and if the current initiatives such as CERP, CEPP, and RS will only make an impact of 30%, he believes a better job can be done and if it is going to cost billions of dollars it is worth the investment. Mr. Perry concluded that he would rather come up with a solution to leave for future generations rather than having no solution because the solution was too expensive.

Tabitha Cale echoed some of Mr. Perry's comments by remarking that she knows that there is no silver bullet solution; however, impacted residents are seeking movement toward a solution that will reduce some of the damaging discharges. Ms. Cale stated it is known that additional storage is needed somewhere in the system and it will take a combination of projects working together. Ms. Cale mentioned a recent study released by one of the realtor associations that showed a connection between falling home values along the St. Lucie River and the Caloosahatchee, so this is an economic issue as well as a personal/recreational issue. Ms. Cale concluded that she would provide the report to the WRAC if requested.

Mike Collins said that when the process was started it was understood by those involved that they would only have, within their purview, the ability to buffer some of the negative impacts to the estuaries, so one of the goals in the beginning was to do what could be done to reduce those impacts. Mr. Collins continued, since then multiple projects have been formulated to meet that goal but “environmental icons” have been going to the press and opposing every project that has been proposed that would provide some sort of relief. Mr. Collins said a lawsuit was filed to stop progress on Acceler8 which would have resulted in achieving over 600,000 ac-ft of storage within the system, much of which would have been in the Kissimmee River basin. Mr. Collins suggested the focus be directed to solutions that may not be perfect, but will move towards resolution to the discharge dilemma. Mr. Collins remarked during the project planning process, quite a bit of debate took place regarding whether or not four feet of storage would make enough water available to be sufficient considering the high rate of evapotranspiration that takes place during the dry season. Mr. Collins said the request for reconsultation the USACE received from US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the Cape Sable seaside sparrow “threw down as a marker” the current closure of the S-12 structures which provide water to the western half of the Park and the western half of Shark River Slough is sixty days which may not sound like much until the rainy season is calculated accurately which results in a three to four month opening. Mr. Collins stated that the reconsultation request makes it clear that USFWS is now seeking 100 out of 120 days of closure. Mr. Collins stated that when put together with invasive species control, he does not understand why land acquisition is being considered at this time. Mr. Collins suggested that right now there is an ability to build some projects and those that are serious about preserving the functionality of the resource for fish and wildlife, it is important to start building and stop arguing.

Bubba Wade remarked that ASR was the silver bullet and it is still being studied. Mr. Wade asked for an update on ASR within the next couple of months including the status and existing barriers.

Joe Capra commented that the reason the option to purchase the land is a highly debated subject is because a decision must be made before October. Mr. Capra asked whether the stakeholders were all interested in at least discussing the option to purchase and what the implications would be or if there was a willingness to discuss an alternative to this purchase or do nothing at all. Mr. Capra said doing nothing is not an option and the deadline is approaching. Mr. Capra remarked that the issue should not be viewed as East Coast residents vs. agriculture and as agriculture is one of the biggest industries in Florida, a working relationship needs to be formed in order to make progress. Mr. Capra requested an opinion on the UF Study as viewed by the agricultural community as he feels it has been widely accepted by others. Mr. Collins responded that after 39 years of being an Everglades advocate said that the rhetoric being touted about the option to purchase will never present again is untrue as there is always the possibility of using eminent domain, if it can be proven that the land is needed. Mr. Collins stated the legislature has already made clear that they do not believe the land is needed and it may not be smart to continue to advise them in this regard. Mr. Collins said in his experience, there is always land in existence that can be utilized as long as it can be proven that it is needed. Mr. Wade responded to Mr. Capra’s request regarding the UF Study as like “body counts in a battle at Vietnam”

because every side claimed victory. Mr. Wade said when looking at the UF Study objectively, the document provided alternatives and the first one was to complete the existing projects which is where the state is headed or consider the option to purchase which was only mentioned three times in 160 pages. Mr. Wade said he does not understand how some individuals took the report and claim that it clearly says to exercise the option to purchase sugar lands in the EAA since the option was included in a list of four or five alternatives that should be considered. Mr. Wade said the UF Study does not clearly state anything, although the state and the District are headed is to take alternative one, which is finish existing projects and then explore if more land is needed in the EAA.

Adam Gelber understands that although many are advocating for moving water south, it is not possible to move the amount of water south that is being advocated for due to capacity and other constraints. Mr. Gelber suggested that the public needs to continue to get the message that there is a desire to get water moving south and into the Park in order to reduce algal blooms resulting from lack of fresh water in the system, but the bottom end of the system is greatly constrained limiting the ability to do that.

Tabitha Cale agreed with Mr. Gelber and stated that one place where a little bit more water has been directed to the Park is where the C-111 Spreader Canal is working and beginning to deliver some benefits. Ms. Cale said it is known that when water is delivered back to the areas where it is needed, positive ecological response is visible including increased submerged aquatic vegetation in Northeast Florida Bay. Ms. Cale said Florida Bay is known to be too salty so more water is needed there, the Park is benefiting, and there has been more water in Taylor Slough and once more water is delivered there and surrounding wetlands the wildlife will begin to respond.

Bubba Wade asked for an update or presentation on the lawsuit mentioned by Mr. Collins regarding the Cape Sable seaside sparrow and the potential impacts to District works.

Joe Capra remarked that he had no interest in eminent domain and hoped that willing sellers were located if necessary for purchasing additional lands for projects. Mr. Capra said the public is actively participating in hopes that the District's Governing Board with the help of WRAC work to solve a problem so it is important to discuss the issue and any alternatives. Mr. Capra said it takes land to build projects and whether sugar lands or other lands are used is unimportant. Mr. Capra stated that a deal was made with the public and it is important to either inform them that the deal is going forward or offer an alternative and an alternative has yet to emerge. Mr. Collins suggested that with his twenty years of voluntary public service all related to water policy issues, and there is a credibility issue involved which does not allow him to support Mr. Capra's idea. Mr. Collins said if his goal was to try and convince the legislature or the Governor that spending \$500,000M on a piece of land that is not needed right now, but should be the priority, credibility of the WRAC and the Governing Board would be lost. Mr. Collins commented that many people have lost credibility through this process doing precisely that. Mr. Collins said right now the ability is present to start the process but the ability will never be present to 100% eliminate any negative impacts of any environmental situation on the face of the earth because "God didn't run it that way and we're not going to be able to." Mr. Collins said to be credible, IDS processes are undertaken as

well as technical analysis and consensus finding and once these tasks are completed action needs to be taken to build or store water or whatever the goal of the planning process was determined to be. Mr. Collins said Ms. Payton may be correct in stating that too much money was spent on Picayune Strand, but the project is built and water is now present. Mr. Collins said stakeholders cannot continue to advocate for continuing to buy land.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Powers announced the next meeting would be held in Homestead on May 7th at the Phicol Williams Community Center and directed members participating in the inspection trip to the proper location.